



## **Update from U.S. Sen. John Cornyn**

**Special State of the Union Edition**

**February 2, 2006**

President Bush delivered his annual State of the Union address on Tuesday evening, January 31. The President emphasized that the State of our Union is strong, and he clearly outlined his vision for the country in the coming year. He will continue leading us on a path that will unite the American people, make us stronger, secure the nation, secure the border, ensure our competitiveness in the global economy, continue our progress toward energy independence, and provide access to health care for more Americans.

### **National Security: Winning the War on Terror**

The President was right in his call to stay engaged around the world and protect Americans here at home. I applaud the many Texas troops—and the families that support them—who continue to play a critical role in this effort every day.

We must remain vigilant in fighting an enemy that wants to kill innocent Americans, as the terrorists did on 9/11. We must carry on the progress we're making in Iraq and Afghanistan to bring democracy and peace to those important regions of the world. And we must continue to use every available legal tool to prevent terrorist attacks here at home.

One of the key tools available is the National Security Agency Terrorist Surveillance Program, which intercepts international communications between al Qaeda abroad and potential terror operatives in the United States. Based on the same authority claimed by past presidents on both sides of the aisle, this program is well within the President's legal authority and is an invaluable early-warning system to prevent future attacks. I'll be participating in a hearing this Monday to discuss this critical issue with Attorney General Alberto Gonzales.

### **Border Security: Stronger Enforcement, Comprehensive Reform**

Border security is one of the most urgent issues facing Texas and our nation today. The recent incursions and violence along the border have made the matter even timelier. So I'll hold additional hearings soon to ensure the situation is addressed without delay.

Furthermore, I continue to be disappointed in the failure of Mexican officials to respond to the intrusions on American sovereignty. With the violence along the border and lawlessness in Mexico, I remain concerned that they have not taken adequate steps to control the situation.

I'm encouraged that the President continues to push not just for bolstering border security, but for a comprehensive approach to a key aspect of our national security. The President called on Congress to pass viable immigration policy that serves both our national security and our economic interests.

The bill I've introduced strengthens border enforcement and comprehensively reforms our immigration system. The bill would greatly increase the number of border patrol agents and make sure they have the equipment and the technology necessary to provide security along our border.

We need both stronger enforcement and reasonable reform of our immigration laws. I'll answer the President's call and work with my colleagues to pass strong border security measures and a comprehensive reform proposal.

For More Information:

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=251126>

### **Economic Security: Competitiveness in Global Economy**

The President unveiled his plan to increase America's competitiveness in a global economy, which translates into jobs here at home. It's important to focus on education and training in math and science. If we remain competitive in these areas, we will be able to compete with the technology and services of anyone in the world.

As the President described, our nation is a prosperous one and it continues on a path of strong economic growth. The President reiterated his commitment to work with Congress to ensure our continued success. Recent statistics reveal the national unemployment rate has slipped to 4.9 percent, unemployment claims are at the lowest level in the last five years, and 4.6 million new jobs were created in the United States in the last two-and-a-half years.

An important part of this growth are the workforce-training initiatives and the community college programs that allow us to train new workers - or help Americans transition to new careers - equipping them with valuable skills to succeed in today's market. I've visited community colleges across Texas to discuss this effort and believe they're making a valuable impact.

In addition, I recently cosponsored two bills to move this agenda forward: The National Innovations Act and the PACE Act (Protecting America's Competitive Edge). These bills focus on advancing math and science education, research opportunities and innovative technology.

### **Energy Security: Independence from Foreign Sources**

Our continued dependence on foreign energy is a national security problem, and it directly affects the Texas economy. Energy security affects our farmers, ranchers, and manufacturers in terms of their costs, and, in turn, affects all Texans and our overall competitiveness. So we must work to decrease our dependence on foreign sources of energy to protect jobs in Texas and protect people here at home.

There is bipartisan consensus to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and it is critical to increase exploration of various alternative sources of energy. Congress can legislate, and we can—and do—repeal laws from time to time, but we can't repeal the laws of supply and demand. And the fact is, there is growing demand in the global economy for limited natural resources. So I applaud the President's emphasis on reducing our dependence on foreign sources of energy.

For More Information:

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=251124>

### **Health Security: Increase Access and Affordability**

I applaud the President's message on health care and the need to reform our system to provide greater access for more Americans. I particularly support reforming the way the federal government regulates and taxes care, making plans more portable, and facilitating more consumer-oriented decision-making when it comes to meeting health care needs and costs. We will also contain costs by reforming our medical liability system.

The President emphasized that consumer-driven health plans play a key role in keeping costs low. Plans such as Health Savings Accounts will help contain costs, and we will continue working to ensure that these options are more attractive to consumers by improving transparency, access and portability. And as we increase access to care, we also must continue advocating for prevention, equipping people with both the information and the care they need to live healthy lives.

### **Hurricane Rebuilding Efforts Continue**

The President reiterated his concern for and commitment to rebuilding the areas impacted by the devastating storms last year. I share this concern and commitment, and will continue working to ensure the

resources necessary for the ongoing relief and rebuilding efforts following Hurricanes Rita and Katrina.

**New Supreme Court Justice: Samuel Alito**

Finally, I extend my congratulations to Justice Samuel Alito and his family on his confirmation to the U.S. Supreme Court. I appreciated the opportunity to participate in his swearing-in ceremony at the White House. I commend Justice Alito for his stamina during the confirmation process, and thank him for his willingness to continue serving our great country. It has been my pleasure to support such a fine nominee.

For More Information:

<http://cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=250931>

**Come By and Say Hello**

If you're traveling to Washington for business or pleasure, I would appreciate the chance to say hello while you're here. Every Tuesday that the Senate is in session, I host an open house in my office - Room 625 in the Hart Senate Office Building, from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m., so I can visit with my fellow Texans. Please call Alisa Merritt at (202) 224-2934 to let me know you'll be coming.

Best regards,

Senator John Cornyn

\*\* If you know others who would like to receive my updates, please direct them to subscribe at my Senate web site, [www.cornyn.senate.gov](http://www.cornyn.senate.gov).

\*\*To unsubscribe to this list, please e-mail: [LISTSERV@EMAIL-LISTS.SENATE.GOV](mailto:LISTSERV@EMAIL-LISTS.SENATE.GOV) and type

"UNSUBSCRIBE CORNYNUPDATE" in the body of the e-mail.

\*\*To change the subscribed e-mail address, e-mail: [LISTSERV@EMAIL-LISTS.SENATE.GOV](mailto:LISTSERV@EMAIL-LISTS.SENATE.GOV) and type CHANGE CORNYNUPDATE newaddress in the body of the e-mail.

\*\*NOTE: A confirmation email will be sent and the address change will not take effect until the request is validated by a reply message.

More information on these issues is available on my Senate web site, [www.cornyn.senate.gov](http://www.cornyn.senate.gov). The site also includes press releases and other information that may be of interest to you.